

The coal oil lamp was used for many years as the only way of illuminating the home. The following poem is reminiscent of those early days.

### COAL OIL LAMP

My grandpa says we really need one hundred  
watts to see to read  
"You bet!" says he, "'lectricity's fine --just  
flip a switch and light'll shine,  
No match to strike, no oil to pour, no tedious  
chimney-cleaning chore,  
And yet, the old-style coal oil lamp was like  
a friend," says Gramp.  
I recollect we used to sit thru twilight's charm  
till the lamp was lit,  
And then the family gathered tight within the  
golden pool of light.  
Shadows, and the cares of day were pushed to  
corners, held at bay.  
By our old lamp's protective gleam, allowing  
us to read or dream.  
I see my mother mending there -- her loving  
face, her gentle air.  
My father, too, who liked to spin his limericks  
there to make us grin.  
I see my teacher, Miss Morrell, bent on  
teaching me to spell.  
Her hair was grey before its time, I fear the  
fault was mostly mine.  
I thought her quite a bother there, cheered her  
when she moved elsewhere  
But now in looking back, I see how much her  
teaching did for me.  
Dad smoked his pipe, lost in a book, while we  
played tiddly-winks or rook  
Sometimes our mama fed us cakes, courting  
dreams and tummy-aches.  
And when we climbed the stairs to bed, the oil  
lamp lit the way ahead.  
Electric lights are better, true -- without them  
I would hate to do -- but 'neath  
That lamp our youthful dreams were born  
and blended in its beams.  
Its beacon light we glimpsed afar -- our path  
to home -- our guiding star."